

Date of Meeting: 7 March 2023	Location: By Video Conference	THE
Title: User Advisory Group Meeting	Subject or Purpose: Minutes of a regular meeting held on 7 March 2023	NATIONAL ARCHIVES
ATTENDEES		
Grace Ioppolo (Academic)	Anne Samson (Ethnic Minority & Other Diverse Groups)	
Nadine Chambers (Students)	Valerie Johnson (TNA – Research & Collection), Co-chair	
Will Reid (Diversity)	Lucy Fletcher (TNA – Director of Public Access & Government Services), Co-chair	
Mike Grahn (Onsite Personal)	Emmajane Avery (TNA – Director of Public Engagement)	
Susan Moore (Maps)	TS (TNA – Head of Web Archiving)	
Alison Kay (External Archives User)	RM (TNA – Senior Personal Assistant), Minutes	
Jeremy Stocker (Academic Research)		
Roger Fisher (Map Room Users & Overseas Researchers)		
Lisbet Sherlock (Family History & Online)		
APOLOGIES		
Lee Oliver (TNA – Head of Visitor Experience)	Grace Touzel (External Archivist)	
Matthew Cleary (Student & Online)	Pat Reynolds (Family History & Online)	

1.	<u>Introduction & Welcome</u>
	<p>LF introduced the UAG to four new members. The new members provided a brief on their respective areas of speciality and reason for joining the UAG.</p> <p>LF informed the UAG that WR has agreed to remain as a UAG member until 2024 and thanked him for his commitment to another year.</p>
2.	<u>Minutes & Matters Arising</u>
	<p>The UAG meeting minutes for 6 December 2022 were agreed.</p> <p>LF formally thanked Elli Young for her tenure with the UAG informing them of her resignation due to work commitments.</p> <p>The new members agreed to the Terms of Reference and provided signed copies of the Confidentiality Agreement.</p>
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3.	Public Services (EJA)	
	<p>EJA provided the group with an update on the Public Spaces Programme.</p> <p>EJA presented the UAG with some illustrations of progress on the Digital Learning Centre spaces for school students / students which is almost complete. This will include a broadcast studio and two digital production studios, handwashing and bag storage facility as well as lunch areas for schools (Phase 1).</p> <p>EJA informed the group that Phase 2 will include a learning studio for onsite teaching, but this will only be completed when funds are raised in the future.</p> <p>EJA commented on the new furniture in the café with some intimate seating making it more user friendly rather than static.</p> <p>EJA advised the group that the original sign 'Public Records Office' had been revealed due to the old sign becoming discoloured and corroded, but noted that TNA was not changing its name!</p> <p>EJA notified the UAG of new parasols outside the main entrance for additional outside seating, and that the main entrance area had had old redundant lighting and blinds removed, making it look aesthetically more pleasing and clean.</p> <p>EJA informed the group that we intend to put free-standing banners outside the front of the building to express what people will find when they enter TNA, and a planning application is to be submitted. In addition, the handrails are to be painted as part of the maintenance plan.</p> <p>EJA advised the group that the 'Cabinet Table' located near the reading rooms was updated to include the first 20 women in cabinet for Women's History month. From the start of April there will be a display cabinet showcasing 'Document of the Month' which will be located near the Cabinet Table. EJA presented the group with an illustration of the 'Document Reading Room Lab' which will be tested with readers in the coming months.</p>	
Q.	VJ enquired what EJA would require from the users of the Lab.	
A.	EJA informed the group that once the Lab was ready for testing an email would be sent to the group and any feedback would be gratefully received. The group were also informed of the two old desks (from the reading rooms) which are being refurbished and will be brought back with inventive interpretation as to discoveries made in the archives.	
Q.	AS asked if there was a way to make the area by the Cabinet Table quieter as it was noisy.	
A.	EJA explained that this area was a speaking space, but that the tables used by researchers in that area would soon be moved away from the Cabinet Table due to the learning centre works coming to an end.	
Q.	GI asked why there no clearer signs by the train station to the location of The National Archives?	
A.	EJA responded by informing the group that the council has provided permission to install 'brown' direction signs but these have to be installed by the council and that this was taking time.	
Q.	SM asked if there could be more seating provided in the Q1 upstairs link area.	
A.	EJA / LF informed the group that this would be reviewed once next year's budget has been allocated to departments.	
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Q.	AS asked if TNA would be able to feature Inset days for academics and also provide names of staff that could collaborate with researchers.
A.	LF informed the group that providing actual names would be a breach of data protection but perhaps providing names of departments would be helpful, and contact details for research enquiries.
4.	<u>Industrial Action (LF)</u>
	<p>LF provided an update on the PCS Industrial Action and informed the group that TNA had a lot of PCS union members that had public-facing roles.</p> <p>LF informed the group that on 1 February (Industrial Action date) access was provided to users for pre-booked orders.</p> <p>LF notified the group that TNA is expecting further strike action and that they should monitor the website and Twitter for information and continue to encourage their respective networks to order in advance on strike days.</p>
5.	<u>UK Government Web Archive (TS)</u>
	<p>TS provided the UAG with an overview of the UK Government Web Archive (UKGWA), where UK central government information is captured, preserved and, made accessible. It includes videos, tweets and websites dating back from 1996 to the present.</p> <p>TS emphasised that TNA seeks to preserve records in their original context wherever possible and not just use screenshots of web pages.</p> <p>TS informed the group that TNA works with an external supplier to deliver the full service in the cloud.</p> <p>TS provided an outline on what is archived:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Materials published by departments of state ➤ Non departmental public bodies ➤ Royal Commissions ➤ NHS websites that are national in focus ➤ Government Social Media channels (twitter, flicker, you tube, Instagram) <p>TS followed this by providing some statistics to the group:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More than 50,000 captured instances of 10,000+ websites over 26 years ➤ 6.5 billion digital resources equating to 400 terabytes of data ➤ In 2021/2022 TNA took 2,671 websites captures and archived 1,126 social media accounts <p>TS informed the group that web archiving started in 2003 with some websites dating back to 1996 and that the difference between web archiving and other archives is that the online</p>

	<p>resources that are collected are frequently revised, redirected or removed.</p> <p>TNA takes a series of captures or snapshots of a website throughout its lifespan called a 'timeline' telling the story of the website.</p> <p>TS informed the group that TNA archives website and social media on a rolling basis. The gov.uk domain is fully captured every month and new content/changes are captured daily. There are some ad-hoc captures to account for significant events eg. Brexit, Covid-19, the Queen's Jubilee, and the upcoming Coronation.</p> <p>TS advised the group that social media is captured weekly.</p> <p>TS informed the group that the web archive is fully open to the public. UK Government Web Archive (nationalarchives.gov.uk)</p> <p>TS explained how, at any given time, his team are working on around ten requests from Government Departments to archive websites/social media and they work closely with website managers to close sites and support "content refreshes".</p> <p>TS showed illustrations of other forms of access and a snapshot of some users, who range from legal consultants and civil servants to students and researchers.</p> <p>TS informed the group of the Takedown policy at TNA. UK Government content published on the web is considered to be public domain. Content is taken down from the web archive only in exceptional circumstances. TS emphasised that the content is not 'deleted' it is just 'unpublished'.</p> <p>TS ended his presentation by showcasing a live demo.</p>
Q.	LS asked if Google Analytics was used by TNA
A.	TS answered that some analysis was done but further investigation was required
Q.	AK asked if the British Library and the UK Government Web Archives hold the same data.
A.	TS explained that there is an overlap, but that TNA focuses on government records only and, because of this focus and level of QA done, deliver very high quality archives. The British Library's remit is wider, covering the UK web domain more broadly.
NOTE	AK informed the group that there is a plan to archive HS2 in collaboration with TNA.
Q.	NC asked about the Quality Assurance illustrated on the chart in the presentation; and also asked about storage.
A.	TS explained that content is analysed by comparing the live website to the archived data. Samples are compared by staff at TNA. For sites which are closing, a series of processes, manual and automatic are followed to give the best coverage and quality. With respect to storage, TS explained that content is stored on the Cloud via an external supplier, which includes disaster recovery.
	LF informed the group that storage of these records is part of TNA's public task and is an

	ongoing commitment from the Keeper and the Executive Team.
Q.	GI asked if WhatsApp data forms part of the Public Record?
A.	Answer deferred to discussion at AOB.
Q.	RF asked if there was a project to preserve confidential documents from the web?
A.	TS explained that the UKGWA is focussed on archiving the public websites of government.
	LF explained further that the UK Government Web Archive is different from the 'living digital archive', which is the means by which TNA archives the digital public record worthy of permanent preservation.
6,	<u>Delegate Submitted Items (LF)</u>
Q.	SM raised the issue of the advance ordering system, and asked what update is there on making this more flexible so that it meets the needs of researchers. Can TNA aim to go back to ordering the day before?
A.	LF said that we were keeping all aspects of the ordering system under review to see what was technically possible and therefore could be improved upon.
Q.	AS asked if was possible to have bulk orders in advance to save time for staff having to go back and forth consistently. This was raised in particular reference to WO 416 records.
A.	LF and AS to have separate discussion offline. Action: LF
Q.	SM asked if there can be more bulk order slots.
A.	LF to discuss with colleagues to look at demand and what may be possible. Action: LF
Q.	SM requested an update on the 'New Discovery', asking when the beta version would be released and if browsing will be available in this version.
A.	The new version will go out as a private beta in late spring 2023 and into public beta in late summer 2023. TNA are currently looking for users to take part in the private beta testing. Interested members are asked to contact TNA if they are interested in taking part. After Search has gone into public beta the team will move to focus on developing Browse and Advanced Search. The new Search and other parts of the new website will run alongside TNA's

	<p>current website and Discovery.</p> <p>The team will provide the UAG with an update at the next meeting in June. <i>Action: RM to add to the agenda</i></p>
7.	<p><u>Any other business</u></p>
	<p>RM to add Advanced Ordering as an item for the agenda for the next meeting in June. <i>Action: RM</i></p>
	<p>GI asked if non-corporate communication channels can become the public record.</p>
	<p>LF replied that TNA is interested in public records, whatever their format. TNA is not a Regulator, and is not prescriptive about what form the public record can take. TNA have issued Ministers with guidance and have been supporting the Covid enquiry.</p>
	<p>As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 12.15.</p>

Meeting closed at 12:15